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LAND TRANSFERS.

It is now about two years since the Dimsdale frauds, which consisted in the manufacture of false titles to property and similar documents. It was a system of swindling on a comprehensive scale, arising out of the loose slip-slop legal procedure of England as regards the purchase and transfer of real estate. Being detected, tried, and convicted, Dimsdale is now suffering the penalty due to the enormity of his crimes. Till this day, however, the law which permitted tricks of this kind remains unchanged; for even when shewn they are wrong, the English are from various causes difficult to move. At length, the subject of land transfers has been under the consideration of a Parliamentary Committee, and may be legislated upon. Meanwhile, we should like, for general information, to run over the arrangements prevalent in Scotland.

According to the Scotch system, there is no huddling up of land rights. All transactions are above-board, and open to general observation—not that unconcerned persons give themselves any trouble about the rights of this or that one, but the law offers facilities, if people, by paying a small fee, like to inquire. Practically, none but a party interested ever institutes any inquiry. This publicity, to call it so, is secured by means of registers, dating from an early period. At one time, registration was optional; but that, as has been exemplified in England, was found to be illusory. The true date of the present system of registration was 1599, when, by the introduction of district registers, every species of conveyance of lands had to be recorded, under pain of nullity. The system was put on an improved and permanent footing in 1617, when a statute was passed which has since remained the leading one on the subject. It is thus observable the Scottish law of land rights is nearly three hundred years old.

The estimation in which Scotch lawyers held the system, as then established, may be judged of by the strain in which Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate of his day, refers to it after it had

been in operation more than sixty years. 'Some inventions,' he writes, 'flourish more in one country than another, nature allowing no universal excellency, and God designing to gratify every country he hath created; so Scotland hath, above all others, by a serious and long experience obviated all fraud by their public registers.' From 1617 till 1868, when all the district registers were directed to be kept at Edinburgh, one for each county, improvements have been made from time to time; so that if the eulogium just quoted was at all merited two centuries ago, we may assume that perfection has now been nearly attained. We need not enter into details of the several changes. It will be sufficient to indicate shortly the way in which the system now operates.

The principle of the system is that priority of registration secures priority of right. Thus, if two parties hold conveyances to the same property, the one whose conveyance is first recorded, though granted subsequent to the other, has a preferable title. The same result follows in mortgages or bonds over property—the lender whose bond is first recorded having a security preferable to all others, purchasers or lenders, whose deeds may be recorded subsequently, and this irrespective altogether of the dates they bear. It will thus be seen that conveyances of property, or bonds over it, do not act as completed transfers or securities till recorded, and may be rendered altogether nugatory by a deed being put upon the record before them. Unrecorded deeds are binding on the granters personally, but do not affect third parties ignorant of their contents.

The centre of the Scottish registration system is the General Register House, Edinburgh, a spacious modern building, carefully arranged for its assigned purpose, and forming the receptacle of numerous state papers and records of much public value. The chief officer of the establishment is the Lord Clerk-Register, who, besides having a Depute, presides over a large staff of officials, noted for their assiduity in carrying on the public service. In the department connected with the transfer of land rights, where there is

usually a pressure of business, clerks are ready to receive any deed affecting heritable property. When lodged, the first step is to enter in a register known as the Presentment Book such particulars as are necessary to identify it; and the order in which the several deeds appear in this register determines the priority of the rights of the parties in whose favour they are granted. Suppose a mortgage to have been lodged and entered in the Presentment Book at seven minutes past twelve o'clock noon, a second mortgage on the same property lodged and entered one minute later, would be postponed to the former, though it may have been granted previously.

This rigorous accuracy has given so much public confidence, that the impugning of land titles is scarcely known in Scotland. Deeds sent by post to the registrars are in like manner entered in the order in which they are received. The deed is afterwards engrossed verbatim in the Sasine Register; and before being returned to the person by whom it was lodged, has a doquet indorsed upon it stating the date of presentation, and the volume in which it is engrossed. A short abstract of the deed is also prepared and inserted in a Minute Book, so as to supersede the necessity for referring to the book in which it is written at length, and so to facilitate subsequent searches for encumbrances affecting the property. The charge for recording is made on a graduated scale according to the value of the property. A deed conveying property worth five hundred pounds, or a mortgage for that amount, costs two shillings per two hundred words. The maximum rate is charged when the value exceeds five thousand pounds, the charge then being three shillings per two hundred words, with seven and sixpence additional per deed. An ordinary conveyance often contains about eight hundred words, and the expense of recording such a deed would accordingly range from eight shillings to nineteen shillings and sixpence, as the value might be less or greater.

All the records are accessible to the public; but to wade through the piles of volumes which would require to be searched with regard to any one property situated, for example, in the county of Edinburgh, would be a hopeless task. To assist the public so far in making searches, printed abridgments and indexes are now transmitted to the sheriff-clerks of the respective counties; but as it is not practicable to keep these up to the current date of recording, they cannot be trusted to as affording complete information. The practice therefore is to employ a professional searcher, who possesses a thorough familiarity with the registers, and by the aid of indexes, might on an hour or two's notice give particulars as to the state of the title and burdens. In practice, however, searchers are seldom called upon to supply the information with this urgency. The usual way in which a transaction is settled, when the agents for the parties possess the confidence of each other, is for the seller's agent to give an obligation to produce a 'clear search'—that is, to produce a searcher's certificate that there are no burdens existing over the property—within a month or so. The title of the purchaser is put on the record in the meantime;

and the search which is thereupon procured should shew that there are no bonds over the property remaining undischarged, that the chain of titles by which the seller came to possess the property has no missing link, and will close by shewing that the purchaser has now an absolute right to the property by the recording of his conveyance.

Burdens not appearing in the records for forty years, and not kept up by regular payment of interest or otherwise, are held to be extinguished by prescription, so that a search is rarely made for a longer period; and as a search is usually made on each change of ownership, or when a loan is effected, it is comparatively seldom that a search for the full period of forty years is necessary. A search made at one time serves on any subsequent occasion, merely requiring to be continued from the period it left off.

The expense of making a search varies in the different counties, as the number of deeds recorded are less or more. Thus the charge for a search over property in the county of Edinburgh is three shillings per annum; while in the county of Cromarty one shilling per annum only is charged; there being also in every case a fee payable for the use of books, varying from two shillings to ten shillings according to the length of the period over which the search extends. For properties under the value of five hundred pounds, only half-fees are charged.

Separate registers exist for deeds relating to lands within the ancient boundaries of royal burghs. These are kept by the respective town-clerks, who, except in the larger burghs, usually make such searches as are necessary.

Besides the property registers for counties and burghs, there is also kept at Edinburgh the Register of Inhibitions and Adjudications, a search in which discloses any bankruptcy and certain legal diligence affecting the property or the right of the owner to convey it. The charge for a search in this register is three pence per annum and upwards, according to the number of names searched against, besides a small fee for the use of books.

Of course, the processes of registration just described can be satisfactorily carried out only where a reasonable degree of confidence is reposed in the integrity of the different parties concerned. Where there are solicitors of the Dimsdale type, disposed to be fraudulent, and where due care is not exercised by registrars, it might be difficult to establish an unchallengeable system of public registration of land rights. We have seen it stated in letters in the London prints that compulsory registration would only increase the number of deceptions, and consequently lower the value of titles to property. We put no faith in such apprehensions. Ridiculously loose dealings in title-deeds have encouraged frauds which would probably disappear under peremptory regulations, along with a stern code of punishment.

In consequence of the universality of registration in Scotland, it is not necessary to write deeds in a costly and cumbrous manner upon vellum. Their durability being of little consequence, they are written plainly on paper, foolscap size, easily folded up in a bundle. In that condition they are as a matter of convenience ready for consultation. Should any of them be lost by fire or otherwise, the loss can at all times be made good by the proper registrar. In point of fact, a

man no more thinks of dragging his title-deeds about with him than he does of a certificate of his birth or marriage. Here, there will be observed to be a material difference between the usages of England and Scotland. Title-deeds in England are written in a formal and expensive style on sheep-skins, and are intolerably cumbersome. Their preservation is a matter of great importance, for they may be used as a ready and convenient pawn. Taken to a banker, they are accepted as a security for borrowed money. In this manner they may be employed on all occasions of emergency to raise a sum requisite to tide over a temporary depression of funds. Though in some respects convenient, this practice of handing about title-deeds as securities must be somewhat hazardous, and does not commend itself to ordinary business notions. Yet, if the practice be as common as it is alleged to be, we can imagine how much it stands in the way of any thorough introduction of the Scottish system of registration into England.

The cost of land conveyance in England has long been matter of complaint; and no doubt the process might be simplified and cheapened. Even in Scotland, there is room for some improvement. Any general reform on the subject involves a revision in the 'land laws,' not to be lightly entered upon. One thing is properly to be borne in mind. The cost of land conveyance is prodigiously augmented by stamp duties, for the sake of revenue. A case in point has just come within our experience in Scotland. The cost of conveying a property valued at nine thousand four hundred pounds, and where searches were dispensed with, amounted to one hundred pounds eight shillings and eightpence, in which was included the sum of forty-seven pounds and twopence for a stamp, or nearly a half of the whole. Those who agitate for a modification of the land laws would need to begin with the stamp duties, though involving the trouble of considering how the public service is to be carried on without an equivalent tax being spread over the general community.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons appointed to consider the reforms that might be made as to land transfers in England, has lately issued its Report. Various measures are suggested. But we feel assured that partial modifications will prove unavailing, and only lead to fresh vexations. As the Committee seem to have been conscious of the superiority of the Scottish system, we are surprised that they did not recommend its adoption as a whole. There it was ready to be copied in its entirety, with the advantage of establishing a uniformity of usage over Great Britain. This, however, is the era of small measures and bit-by-bit legislation. A century may elapse before the English are prepared to embrace the usages which have flourished with general approbation for the last three hundred years in Scotland. We have alluded to the circumstance of title-deeds in England being deemed valuable as a pawn for borrowed money. There are other serious obstructions to compulsory registration. The nobility and landed gentry are understood to have an extreme reluctance to give the public an opportunity of knowing their financial encumbrances. The solicitors are said to be equally unwilling to shew deeds in which

flaws may be detected. If such be the case, the difficulties in the way of introducing the Scotch system of registration into England must be nearly insuperable.

W. C.

THE BRAVE SWISS BOY.

FROM THE GERMAN.

CHAPTER I.—THE SWISS PEASANT AND HIS SON.

THE first beams of the morning sun were tipping with fire the jagged and icy peaks of the Wellhorn and Matterhorn, those gigantic monarchs of the Bernese Oberland, when a slender youth came out to the door of a small herdsman's cottage near Meyringen, and looked up at the sky to note the weather.

'We shall have a splendid day, father,' said he, after glancing all round for a few minutes. 'There isn't a cloud to be seen, and the fir-trees sparkle like silver in the morning air.'

'I am glad to hear it, Walter,' replied a powerful voice from inside the cottage, 'for I must cross the hill to Grindelwald to-day to see my cousin. It is a long journey, and much pleasanter in fine weather than in rain and fog. You can go and let out the goats, and look after the cow, for we must milk them before I go.'

'Oh, Liesli is not far off,' was the rejoinder; 'I see her coming along; she is passing Frieshardt's house now. She is a good cow, and always knows when it's milking-time.—But what is that?' he exclaimed after a short pause. 'Frieshardt is driving her into his yard!—Hi, neighbour! what are you doing? Don't you know whom that cow belongs to?'

'Yes; of course I do,' replied the farmer roughly. 'But I've taken a fancy to the cow, and mean to keep her. You can tell your father that, if you like, and say that if he wants her he can come and fetch her.'

'Father, father!' cried the boy, turning round, 'neighbour Frieshardt has taken our cow away. Come and get her back.'

Obedying his son's call, Toni Hirzel hastened out of the cottage just in time to see his neighbour locking the byre upon Liesli, the only cow he possessed. 'Oho, my friend!' he exclaimed, 'what is the meaning of this?'

'Don't you understand, Hirzel?' replied his neighbour in a mocking and sarcastic tone. 'Recollect what you promised me the other day. You have been owing me forty francs since last winter, and said you would pay me yesterday. But as you have forgotten it, I have taken your cow, and mean to keep her till I get the money back.'

Toni Hirzel frowned and bit his lips. 'You know very well,' said he, 'that I have not been able to pay my small debt. My poor wife's illness and funeral cost me a great deal of money; but you know quite well that I am an honest man, and that there is no need for you to behave in such an unkind and unfriendly way towards me. It is not neighbourly, Frieshardt.'

'Neighbourly nonsense!' replied the farmer. 'The cow belongs to me until you pay the money.'

With these words he turned on his heel and went into his house, the size and general appearance of which bespoke the comfort, if not the

luxury of its owner. With a sad and anxious expression, Toni Hirzel followed him with his eye.

'But father,' said the youth in surprise and anger, 'do you mean quietly to put up with that? I wouldn't suffer it, if I were you.'

'Hush, hush, my boy!' replied his father quietly, 'It is certainly not very kind of Frieshardt to treat a poor neighbour in such a harsh way; but he has the law on his side, for I can't deny that I owe him the money. I should have paid him long ago if it had been possible, but your poor mother's illness and death prevented me. We must have patience. I daresay my cousin will lend me the forty francs if I ask him, and then we shall get our cow back again. Don't be afraid, Watty. You shall see Liesli feeding in the meadow again to-morrow.'

'Yes, that she shall, father,' said the boy in a decided tone. 'She shall be brought back whether you get the money or not. Frieshardt shall give her up to-day, and be thoroughly ashamed into the bargain for his hard-heartedness! He has got forty cows on the hills, and yet robs a poor neighbour of the only one he has got. What harm have we done him, that he should treat us in such a way?'

'I will tell you, Watty, for you are now growing tall and sensible, so that one can talk to you,' replied his father. 'He has envied me the possession of Liesli for a long time, for she is the best cow in the whole neighbourhood; and he offered me two hundred francs for her last autumn. As I wouldn't sell her, he has seized her now, thinking that I can't pay him the money he has lent me. If I were to go to law with him, the cow would be valued, and he would only pay me what she is worth over and above the debt. That is his calculation. But I hope he will soon find that he has made a great mistake.'

'Yes; I hope he will, father,' said the boy. 'Go over to Grindelwald quietly; but don't be annoyed if you can't borrow the money. I tell you that I will get the cow back this very day; and you know, father, that when I say so I mean it.'

'I hope you haven't got any foolish plans in your head, Watty,' said his father. 'It is of no use trying force against our neighbour, for he is to a certain extent in the right.'

'I am not thinking of using force,' said the boy. 'Leave the matter to me, and go quietly on your journey. I know perfectly well what I am going to do, and you may be certain that it is nothing wrong.'

The tall and ruddy youth looked at his father with such a steady and open expression, that all his fears were silenced. 'Well, you are no longer a child, Walter,' said he. 'You were sixteen last May, and ought to have come to years of discretion. But I should very much like to know what plan you have got in your head. Won't you tell me, boy?'

'You shall hear to-night, after you come back, father,' replied Walter, smiling. 'But I assure you again that there is nothing wrong or wicked in it, and give you my hand upon it!'

'Well then, do whatever you have a mind to,' said his father. 'I must not lose any more time, or it will be too late before I get back. Farewell, my boy, and see that you don't play any roguish tricks!'

With these words the peasant took his alpenstock, as the long iron-pointed stick is named which is used for crossing the ice-fields, and set forth.

'Good-bye, my dear father,' said the boy, gazing after him until a turn in the road hid him from view. 'It is better that you should go away quietly and without anxiety. If I had told you what I am going to do, you would have been vexed and nervous, and have tried to turn me from it. But now I shall have nothing to hinder me, and I can set to work in earnest. I will milk the goats first though, that the poor animals may not suffer till I get back.'

Obedient to his loud call the goats came frisking along; and after having relieved them of their milk, Walter drank some, ate a little black bread to it, and then put the rest of the milk in a flat pan, which he set carefully in the cool cellar. When the goats had returned to the hills and were clambering from crag to crag in search of grass and herbage, Walter slung a light hunting-bag across his shoulder, stuck a small axe with a short handle into his belt, and a knife into his pocket; filled a bottle with goat's milk, and then cut off a large hunch of bread and placed it with the bottle in his bag. He then selected a stout alpenstock and tried it carefully, to see if the iron point were sharp and strong. When these preparations were made, he looked for a piece of thin strong cord, such as the chamois-hunters take with them on their dangerous Alpine journeys, put it into his bag beside the bread and milk, and quitted the cottage, the door of which he bolted on the outside.

The cottage was about half-an-hour's walk from the inn on the road from Meyringen to Grindelwald, and thither the stout-hearted youth turned his steps. The sun was still low in the east when he arrived, for it was early in the morning; but a number of horses and mules stood at the door of the inn waiting for their riders. Several guides were loitering about, ready to conduct travellers either to the steep heights lying above the village, down to the beautiful waterfalls of the Reichenbach, or to the village Meyringen.

'Well, Watty Hirzel,' said one of the guides in answer to the boy's salute, 'I suppose you want to earn a couple of francs to-day, as you have come armed with alpenstock and game-bag? You couldn't have chosen a better day! Every room in the inn is full, and you will easily get somebody to take to the glaciers or anywhere else.'

'No, no, Mohrle,' replied the boy; 'I haven't come to take your trade away from you; I only want to speak to Mr Seymour, the gentleman from Scotland who has been staying here for about a month. He hasn't left yet, I hope?'

'No; there he is at the window,' said the guide. 'But you won't be able to earn anything from him; for he knows all the roads of the Oberland as well as any of us. What do you want to speak to him about?'

'You will find that out in the evening perhaps, when you come back,' replied Walter. 'It is a secret at present.'

'Aha, I understand! You have discovered the track of a chamois, and are going to take the gentleman to see if he can get a shot at it. He seems quite mad upon hunting, and I daresay you will get a five-franc piece if you help him.'

'Very likely, Mohrle,' replied the youth, with a laugh; and then bowed to the gentleman, who stood at a window of the inn surveying the lively scene below. Opening the window, he beckoned to the boy, who bowed again, and went into the house.

'He is a sharp boy,' said the guide to one of his companions. 'There are not many lads in the Oberland who are as bold and active in climbing as he is. And no one can beat him for deer-stalking. But it's no wonder, for Toni Hirzel, his father, is the best chamois-hunter in this part of the country.'

'Yes; he is a brave fellow,' was the reply. 'I know his father well. There isn't a cleverer sportsman in the mountains; but it's a dangerous life, and I shouldn't like to change places with him. It is much more comfortable to shew strangers the sights; there is less peril and a great deal more profit in it.'

'And yet I would wager anything that Toni wouldn't change places with us,' replied the first speaker. 'He told me only a week ago that it was impossible to give up the hunting life. "My father and grandfather both lost their lives by it," said he; "and I know I shan't fare any better; but whenever I see the track of a chamois, I must be off after it." That is the way with all your chamois-hunters.'

'Well, may God long preserve him from such an awful death,' said the other. 'But there comes our party. Look after your horse, Mohrle!'

The conversation was thus abruptly cut short. The ladies and gentlemen mounted the animals that were waiting for them, and in a few minutes the space in front of the inn was cleared of the busy throng.

'Now then,' said the young Scotchman, whose attention had been occupied with the company which had just left, and who now turned to Walter. 'Has your father discovered some new tracks, and sent you to tell me?'

'No sir. I have come to ask you if you were in earnest the other day, and if you really wish to have a vulture's brood!'

A vulture's brood, boy?' inquired the Scotchman with eager and sparkling eyes. 'Have you discovered one?'

'Yes sir,' replied the youth. 'I have clambered up among the wild ravines of the Engelhorn for several days, and yesterday I descried a spot where I am pretty certain there is an eyrie. If so, the young birds must be well fledged already; so it won't do to lose much time in getting them.'

'Well go and fetch them then!' exclaimed the gentleman hastily. 'I have set my mind upon having a couple of young vultures.'

'And you shall have them, if Heaven preserves my feet from slipping and my hand from trembling,' said the boy. 'But I must first know what you are willing to give me for the birds.'

'I have already told you that you shall have thirty francs if you bring them here alive.'

Walter shook his head. 'That is not enough, sir,' he replied. 'I can't do it for that. I must have forty francs.'

A smile almost of contempt passed over the lips of Mr Seymour. 'So young, and already so greedy!' said he. 'Begone! I hate avarice, and will rather lose the birds than be cheated in such a way!'

Walter blushed deeply. His feelings were so wounded by these words that his heart swelled as if it would burst, and his eyes filled with tears. But with a vigorous effort he controlled himself and gave a quiet answer. 'It is not greed or avarice that makes me ask for more money. You condemn me unjustly sir.'

'What else then, can it be?' inquired Mr Seymour angrily.

In a few simple words Walter described the harsh conduct of the neighbour who had taken away his father's cow for a debt of forty francs, and said that he had hoped the stranger would readily give the trifling sum of ten francs more if he only knew how dangerous it was to attempt the vulture's eyrie. While he spoke, the angry look gradually disappeared from the traveller's face, and he smiled with friendliness and goodwill upon the boy.

'And you will expose yourself to this danger to serve your father?' he inquired.

'Yes, sir; I have made up my mind to do so.'

'But is it so very dangerous to get at the nest?'

'So dangerous, that I couldn't make up my mind to it yesterday,' replied Walter. 'It is built on one of the steepest crags of the Engelhorn, and can only be reached by a very narrow ridge of rock with dreadful precipices on both sides.'

'And you are going to risk your life to help your father to pay the money he owes?'

'Yes; and I am not afraid, if I can only be sure of the reward.'

'Well then, that alters my opinion. Bring me the young vultures, and the forty francs are yours.'

Walter warmly thanked the liberal stranger for his generosity, and was about to leave the room; but surprised at the boy's courage, and perhaps alarmed at the idea of exposing him to such frightful peril, Mr Seymour called him back.

'I have changed my mind,' said he; 'I really have no use for the birds, at least not at present; and I daresay you will be able to discover another nest that can be got at without so much danger; and to tell you the truth, I don't care about having such young ones. Go quietly home, my boy!—But why do you look so sorrowful and alarmed? Oh, I see; you are afraid of losing the money! No, no; I didn't mean that. Take these two gold coins—they are a present from me—that will just make up the sum that your father wants.'

Walter stood as if thunder-struck, unable to understand such generosity, and thought the stranger was joking with him in giving such a large sum for nothing.

'Take it, my boy—take it,' said Mr Seymour, smiling. 'Your father must and shall be assisted in his difficulty, for he must be a good man to have such a brave and affectionate son. But the life of a human being can't be risked for the sake of a couple of stupid birds.'

In surprise and confusion, Walter took the money, expressed his thankfulness in a few mumbled words and shuffled out of the room. When he reached the open air, he recovered his self-possession to some extent; and holding the gold coins fast in one hand, threw his cap up in

the air with the other, uttered a loud shout of joy, and bounded homewards again at the top of his speed. Having reached the cottage, he put the money in a corner of the cupboard in which his father kept his small stock of cash, locked the door, and put the key in a place of safety, and then left the cottage again.

'Now everything is in first-rate order,' said he to himself. 'Father will be sure to find the money when he comes back, and I shall have plenty of time to see how the vulture's nest is to be got at. Mr Seymour shall have the birds, no matter what trouble and danger it may cost me. He shall soon see that I am neither selfish nor unthankful to him for his generosity.'

GLIMPSES OF LONDON.

'He who is tired of London is tired of existence,' said Dr Johnson; and Charles Lamb, as ardent a lover of the town, declared to Wordsworth, in a letter written in 1801, that 'London itself, a pantomime and a masquerade,' fed him without the power of satiating him. 'The wonder of these sights impels me into night-walks about her crowded streets, and I often shed tears in the motley Strand, from fullness of joy at so much life.'

We have before us a work in two volumes, by Augustus J. C. Hare, entitled *Walks in London* (Daldy, Isbister, & Co.), giving yet another proof of the inexhaustible interest of the subject of the great metropolis, and how it teems with memories of great names and great historic deeds. While perusing these volumes we can follow our garrulous guide in his excursions; viewing the objects of interest and wandering through all the more interesting streets, listening to his anecdotes, and the literary and historical associations which they call up. In the first volume we are guided through the bustle of the City; in the second, we visit the West End and Westminster.

The very fogs of London, according to Mr Hare, when they are not too thick, may be of service to the artist. London, he affirms, is one of the most picturesque capitals in Europe; no town is better supplied with greenery; the parks are full of beauty. The best of the country-produce flows into town, the result being that the Cockney has the advantage over the countryman in being able to indulge in better strawberries, cherries, and vegetables, than may be had elsewhere. The population of London alone is greater than that of the whole of Denmark or Switzerland, and nearly as great as that of the whole of Scotland. The town has been travelling westward since the time of the Plantagenets; always moving into the country, and never halting there. To see London properly, we are told that we must see the excited crowds at the Stock Exchange, the banks, and the Guildhall; the Post-office with its intricate arrangements, and the crowds which stream along Cheapside, Cornhill, and Great Tower Street on a week-day. Or we must descend the Thames from Vauxhall Bridge, and gain an idea of the

river-traffic; and ascend the Monument. Those who find the parks monotonous, our author suggests, might refresh both mind and body by mornings spent amongst the tombs at Westminster, in visiting the famous picture-galleries, or in treading, as he has done, some of the ancient City by-ways.

Beginning with Charing Cross—a place of great attraction to all visitors—it is curious to remark that the finest statue in London, that of Charles I., the work of Hubert le Sueur, was sold by parliament to a brazier, with orders that it should be broken up. Instead of doing so, the ingenious tradesman hid the statue, and made a large sum of money by selling brass handles for knives ostensibly made from it. At the Restoration it was mounted on its present pedestal. Harry Vane the Younger lived at Charing Cross; Isaac Barrow died over a saddler's shop here in 1677; and in a lane close by lived the mother of Ben Jonson. John Evelyn lived several years in Villiers Street, by the side of Charing Cross Station. The Strand—so called because of its following the *strand*, the shore of the Thames—was at one time popular with the aristocracy on account of its being the highway from the royal palace at Westminster to the royal palace on the Fleet. Beyond the gardens of York House, on the same side of the river, once ranged the houses of the great nobles. In Adelphi Terrace died Garrick the actor, and the witty Topham Beauclerk.

In Exeter House near the Strand, lived and died Lord Burleigh. Elizabeth visiting him in a head-dress so high that she could not enter the door, was asked by the servant to stoop. 'I will stoop for your master,' was the reply, 'but not for the king of Spain.' Lord Burleigh apologising for his inability to stand up, owing to an infirmity of his legs, she replied: 'My lord, we do not make use of you for the badness of your legs, but for the goodness of your head.' While the Savoy Palace, in the neighbourhood of the Strand, was the residence of John of Gaunt, the poet Chaucer was married there to Philippa de Ruet, a lady in the household of the Duchess of Lancaster. In the church of St Clement Danes sat Dr Johnson, when 'repeating the responses in the Litany with tremulous energy;' and there also in his seventy-fifth year he returned public thanks for recovery from illness. In Norfolk Street lodged Peter the Great, when in England; also William Penn, who had a peeping-hole in order to survey all who entered.

William Congreve the dramatist lived and died in Surrey Street. In Essex Street, Prince Charles Edward lived for five days in September 1750, at the house of Lady Primrose. Here also Flora Macdonald found an asylum after her release by the government. Temple Bar, so recently removed, was built in 1670, Christopher Wren being the architect. It was customary in those days to exhibit the heads of political offenders after their execution, the last exposed being those of certain noblemen and others who were concerned in the rebellion of 1745. The spikes supporting the heads were only removed within the century. In front of the bar, Titus Oates, standing in the pillory, was pelted with dead cats and rotten eggs; while Daniel Defoe, placed in the same position for a libel on the government, received an ovation from the people; his health

was drunk, and the pillory was hung with flowers. Close to the bustle of Fleet Street, yet removed from it, stand the Inns of Court. Thither the Knights Templars removed in 1184, and many of the peculiar terms used by them have descended to these times. Chaucer was one of the students of the Middle Temple in the time of Edward III. The Temple Church is the only original relic of the residence of the Knights Templars. A white marble monument exists in the interior of the church to John Selden, styled by Milton 'the chief of learned men reputed in this land.' By the side of a paved walk leading along the north side of the church there is a simple monument to the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, bearing this plain inscription: 'Here lies Oliver Goldsmith.'

Crown Office Row, in the vicinity of the Temple, was the birthplace of Charles Lamb. In prospect of taking lodgings in King's Bench Walk, he wrote: 'I shall be airy, up four pair of steps, as in the country; and in a garden, in the midst of enchanting, more than Mahometan paradise, London, whose dirtiest, drab-frequented alley, and her lowest bowing tradesman, I would not exchange for Skiddaw, Helvellyn, James, Walter, and the parson into the bargain.' The learned Blackstone, whilst writing the fourth volume of his *Commentaries* on the first floor of No. 2 Brick Court, was much disturbed by the roaring comic songs, games, and supper-parties indulged in by Oliver Goldsmith, who occupied the rooms above him. And here Goldsmith, dreadfully in debt, died on April 9, 1774.

Gray's Inn—which derives its name from the family of Gray de Wilton—is the fourth Inn of Court of importance; there Lord Bacon wrote his *Novum Organum*. Of the trees originally planted by Lord Bacon in the gardens, none is remaining. Thither came Pepys when the place was a fashionable promenade: 'When church was done, my wife and I walked to Gray's Inn, to observe the fashions of the ladies, because of my wife's making some clothes.' The four Inns of Court have thus been characterised:

Gray's Inn for walks, Lincoln's Inn for wall,
The Inner Temple for a garden, and the Middle
for a hall.

Child's Bank in Fleet Street dates from the time of Charles I., and is one of the oldest banking houses in England. Charles II., Nell Gwynne, Prince Rupert, Pepys, Dryden, and others dealt with this bank. Next door to the bank once stood the *Devil's Tavern*, which was patronised by Ben Jonson, and in turn by Swift, Addison, and Dr Johnson. It is said that Jack Sheppard found the *Bible Tavern* in Shire Lane very convenient for his orgies, as it possessed a trap-door by which he could escape when disturbed. The *Cock Tavern*, No. 201 Fleet Street—the meeting-place of the most celebrated wits and scholars of the last two centuries—remains internally unaltered since the time of James I. Dryden and Otway lived opposite each other in Fetter Lane, and used to quarrel in verse. On the left of this Lane stands the new Record Office; one of the greatest of the many valuable documents it contains being the Domesday Book, in two volumes in vellum, written in the time of William the Conqueror. Fleet Street has many associations with Dr John-

son; Boswell met him frequently in the *Mitre Tavern*; his wife died in Gough Square, where the greater part of his Dictionary was written, and where the *Rambler* and the *Idler* were begun; and in No. 8 Bolt Court died the lexicographer, surrounded by many pensioners on his bounty. One of the many generous acts of Johnson's life was his visit to Goldsmith when the latter resided in Wine Office Court. Finding the author pressed for money, Johnson disposed of the manuscript of a novel his needy friend had written, to Newberry for sixty pounds. The manuscript lay neglected for two years, when it was given to the world as the *Vicar of Wakefield*. In Gunpowder Alley, an offshoot of Shoe Lane, Richard Lovelace the Cavalier poet died from starvation. In Salisbury Court, Samuel Richardson wrote and printed his *Pamela*; and there also Goldsmith acted as his press corrector. John Milton wrote his treatises *Of Reformation*, *Of Practical Episcopacy*, and others in the house of one Russell, a tailor in St Bride's Churchyard, where he lodged in 1643. Here he whipped and instructed his sister's two boys, and thither he brought his royalist wife, Mrs Mary Powell, who found life here so quiet and 'so irksome to her, that she went away to her parents at Forest Hill,' from which, however, she afterwards returned.

The Old cathedral of St Paul's was five times burnt—thrice by lightning. The new building, begun under Christopher Wren in 1675, cost, we are exactly informed, seven hundred and forty-seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-four pounds two shillings and ninepence. The money was raised by a tax on every chaldron of coals brought into the port of London, and this fact alone, it has been said, gives it a right to its smoke-blackened appearance. Relics of three different ages were found when its foundations were laid—Saxon coffins and tombs, British graves, and all the evidences of the existence of a Roman cemetery. Great historic tombs and monuments, including those of Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington, are amongst its chief objects of interest. St Paul's School was founded in 1514 by Dean Colet; there Milton was educated from his eleventh to his sixteenth year. In the Herald's College, near St Paul's Churchyard, were deposited the sword, dagger, and turquoise ring of James IV. of Scotland, who was slain at Flodden. Before the Great Fire of London, St Paul's Churchyard was the great headquarters of the booksellers. Now Paternoster Row is sacred to the profession.

Christ's Hospital (the Blue-coat School), founded by Edward VI. on the site of the monastery of Gray Friars, for destitute and fatherless children, has been the *alma mater* of many eminent men, notably Coleridge and Charles Lamb in recent times. The library was founded by the celebrated Sir Richard Whittington. The new meat-market at Smithfield, in Mr Hare's words, 'is a perfect forest of slaughtered calves, pigs, and sheep, hanging from cast-iron balustrades—actually seventy-five acres of meat.' Cheapside is celebrated in history as having been the scene of many a conflict between the City 'prentices. Between Bread Street and Friday Street stood the *Mermaid Tavern*, founded by Ben Jonson in 1603, and which numbered Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Donne, Selden, &c. amongst its members.

Little Britain, Aldersgate—so called because of

the mansion of John, Duke of Bretagne and Earl of Richmond—was a great bookselling centre in the time of the Stuarts. Wandering amongst the bookstalls there, the Earl of Dorset is said to have discovered a copy of *Paradise Lost*, which he purchased. The bookseller asked him to recommend it if he approved of it, as he had other copies on hand which seemed unsaleable. Shewing it to Dryden, the poet remarked: 'This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too.' After his removal from St Bride's Churchyard, Milton lived in a 'pretty garden-house' in Aldersgate Street, removing to Jewin Street in 1661, where he married his third wife. Here he gave lessons to Ellwood the Quaker, in the foreign pronunciation of Latin. In St Giles Church, Cripplegate, Milton was buried in 1674. His bones were exhumed in 1790, his teeth extracted, and carried off by the churchwardens; and for many years the mutilated skeleton was exhibited to the public at twopence and threepence a head! Fox the martyrologist is buried here. In the parish register is recorded the marriage of Oliver Cromwell and Elizabeth Bowchier, August 20, 1620. In Bishopsgate Street is Crosby Hall, built by Sir John Crosby, alderman of the City of London in 1461. Mr Hare considers this place, even with its late lath-and-plaster front to the street, as one of the most beautiful specimens of domestic architecture left in London, and one of the best examples of fifteenth-century work in England.

The royal palace of Whitehall attained its greatest measure of splendour under Charles I. Court pleasures were organised regardless of expense; poetry, painting, music, and architecture were all liberally patronised. In the Banqueting House the hospitalities were on the most gigantic scale. The king's household consumed yearly, amongst other meats, fifteen hundred oxen, seven thousand sheep, twelve hundred calves, three hundred porkers, six thousand eight hundred lambs, three hundred fitches of bacon, and twenty-six boars. The list is so alarming that we give only these further items of consumption: one hundred and forty dozen of geese, fourteen hundred and seventy dozen of chickens; in the shape of bread, three hundred and sixty-four thousand bushels of wheat were used; in drink—six hundred tuns of wine, and seventeen hundred tuns of beer. On the morning of the execution of Charles I., the 30th January 1649, the king was in the Cabinet Chamber overlooking the Privy Garden, waiting until the scaffold was ready. Here he prayed and conversed with Bishop Juxon, and ate some bread and drank some claret; and while doing so, Cromwell, in a distant small room, was signing the warrant for his execution. Cromwell when installed Lord Protector of the Commonwealth, took up rooms in Whitehall, and employed Milton to act as his private secretary. Here too, Cromwell died while a great storm was raging in the Park, on September 3, 1658. Charles II. revived the reign of pleasure at Whitehall, and died there on February 6, 1685. But with the flight of James II. and the entrance of the Dutch troops into London, the glory of the place passed away.

Regarding the Tower, Westminster, Whitehall, Holland House, and all the well-known and less-known nooks and by-ways of London, the reader will find in Mr Hare's volumes a mine of interesting information. Where possible, he has

quoted largely the opinions of men of eminence, historical, biographical, and topographical, and has enriched his volumes by woodcut engravings of the more picturesque localities.

THE MYSTERY OF SASASSA VALLEY.

A SOUTH AFRICAN STORY.

Do I know why Tom Donahue is called 'Lucky Tom?' Yes; I do; and that is more than one in ten of those who call him so can say. I have knocked about a deal in my time, and seen some strange sights, but none stranger than the way in which Tom gained that sobriquet and his fortune with it. For I was with him at the time.—Tell it? Oh, certainly; but it is a longish story and a very strange one; so fill up your glass again, and light another cigar while I try to reel it off. Yes; a very strange one; beats some fairy stories I have heard; but it's true sir, every word of it. There are men alive at Cape Colony now who'll remember it and confirm what I say. Many a time has the tale been told round the fire in Boers' cabins from Orange State to Griqualand; yes, and out in the Bush and at the Diamond Fields too.

I'm roughish now sir; but I was entered at the Middle Temple once, and studied for the Bar. Tom—worse luck!—was one of my fellow-students; and, a wildish time we had of it, until at last our finances ran short, and we were compelled to give up our so-called studies, and look about for some part of the world where two young fellows with strong arms and sound constitutions might make their mark. In those days the tide of emigration had scarcely begun to set in towards Africa, and so we thought our best chance would be down at Cape Colony. Well—to make a long story short—we set sail, and were deposited in Cape Town with less than five pounds in our pockets; and there we parted. We each tried our hands at many things, and had ups and downs; but when, at the end of three years, chance led each of us up-country and we met again, we were, I regret to say, in almost as bad a plight as when we started.

Well, this was not much of a commencement; and very disheartened we were, so disheartened that Tom spoke of going back to England and getting a clerkship. For you see we didn't know that we had played out all our small cards, and that the trumps were going to turn up. No; we thought our 'hands' were bad all through. It was a very lonely part of the country that we were in, inhabited by a few scattered farmers, whose houses were stockaded and fenced in to defend them against the Kaffirs. Tom Donahue and I had a little hut right out in the Bush; but we were known to possess nothing, and to be handy with our revolvers, so we had little to fear. There we waited, doing odd jobs, and hoping that something would turn up. Well, after we had been there about a month something did turn up upon a certain night, something which was the making of both of us; and it's about that night sir, that I'm going to tell you. I remember it well. The wind was howling past our cabin, and the rain threatened to burst in our rude window. We had a great wood-fire crackling and sputtering on the

hearth, by which I was sitting mending a whip, while Tom was lying in his bunk groaning disconsolately at the chance which had led him to such a place.

'Cheer up, Tom—cheer up,' said I. 'No man ever knows what may be awaiting him.'

'Ill-luck, ill-luck, Jack,' he answered. 'I always was an unlucky dog. Here have I been three years in this abominable country; and I see lads fresh from England jingling the money in their pockets, while I am as poor as when I landed. Ah, Jack, if you want to keep your head above water, old friend, you must try your fortune away from me.'

'Nonsense, Tom; you're down in your luck to-night. But hark! Here's some one coming outside. Dick Wharton, by the tread; he'll rouse you, if any man can.'

Even as I spoke the door was flung open, and honest Dick Wharton, with the water pouring from him, stepped in, his hearty red face looming through the haze like a harvest-moon. He shook himself, and after greeting us sat down by the fire to warm himself.

'Whereaway, Dick, on such a night as this?' said I. 'You'll find the rheumatism a worse foe than the Kaffirs, unless you keep more regular hours.'

Dick was looking unusually serious, almost frightened, one would say, if one did not know the man. 'Had to go,' he replied—'had to go. One of Madison's cattle was seen straying down Sasassa Valley, and of course none of our blacks would go down *that* Valley at night; and if we had waited till morning, the brute would have been in Kaffirland.'

'Why wouldn't they go down Sasassa Valley at night?' asked Tom.

'Kaffirs, I suppose,' said I.

'Ghosts,' said Dick.

We both laughed.

'I suppose they didn't give such a matter-of-fact fellow as you a sight of their charms?' said Tom from the bunk.

'Yes,' said Dick seriously—'yes; I saw what the niggers talk about; and I promise you, lads, I don't want ever to see it again.'

Tom sat up in his bed. 'Nonsense, Dick; you're joking, man! Come, tell us all about it. The legend first, and your own experience afterwards.—Pass him over the bottle, Jack.'

'Well, as to the legend,' began Dick—'it seems that the niggers have had it handed down to them that that Sasassa Valley is haunted by a frightful fiend. Hunters and wanderers passing down the defile have seen its glowing eyes under the shadows of the cliff; and the story goes that whoever has chanced to encounter that baleful glare, has had his after-life blighted by the malignant power of this creature. Whether that be true or not,' continued Dick ruefully, 'I may have an opportunity of judging for myself.'

'Go on, Dick—go on,' cried Tom. 'Let's hear about what you saw.'

'Well, I was groping down the Valley, looking for that cow of Madison's, and I had, I suppose, got half-way down, where a black craggy cliff juts into the ravine on the right, when I halted to have a pull at my flask. I had my eye fixed at the time upon the projecting cliff I have mentioned, and noticed nothing unusual about it. I

then put up my flask and took a step or two forward, when in a moment there burst apparently from the base of the rock, about eight feet from the ground and a hundred yards from me, a strange lurid glare, flickering and oscillating, gradually dying away and then reappearing again.—No, no; I've seen many a glow-worm and firefly—nothing of that sort. There it was burning away, and I suppose I gazed at it, trembling in every limb, for fully ten minutes. Then I took a step forwards, when instantly it vanished, vanished like a candle blown out. I stepped back again; but it was some time before I could find the exact spot and position from which it was visible. At last, there it was, the weird reddish light, flickering away as before. Then I screwed up my courage, and made for the rock; but the ground was so uneven that it was impossible to steer straight; and though I walked along the whole base of the cliff, I could see nothing. Then I made tracks for home; and I can tell you, boys, that until you remarked it, I never knew it was raining, the whole way along.—But hollo! what's the matter with Tom?

What indeed? Tom was now sitting with his legs over the side of the bunk, and his whole face betraying excitement so intense as to be almost painful. 'The fiend would have two eyes. How many lights did you see, Dick? Speak out!'

'Only one.'

'Hurrah!' cried Tom—'that's better!' Whereupon he kicked the blankets into the middle of the room, and began pacing up and down with long feverish strides. Suddenly he stopped opposite Dick, and laid his hand upon his shoulder: 'I say, Dick, could we get to Sasassa Valley before sunrise?'

'Scarcely,' said Dick.

'Well, look here; we are old friends, Dick Wharton, you and I. Now, don't you tell any other man what you have told us, for a week. You'll promise that; won't you?'

I could see by the look on Dick's face as he acquiesced that he considered poor Tom to be mad; and indeed I was myself completely mystified by his conduct. I had, however, seen so many proofs of my friend's good sense and quickness of apprehension, that I thought it quite possible that Wharton's story had had a meaning in his eyes which I was too obtuse to take in.

All night Tom Donahue was greatly excited, and when Wharton left he begged him to remember his promise, and also elicited from him a description of the exact spot at which he had seen the apparition, as well as the hour at which it appeared. After his departure, which must have been about four in the morning, I turned into my bunk and watched Tom sitting by the fire splicing two sticks together, until I fell asleep. I suppose I must have slept about two hours; but when I awoke, Tom was still sitting working away in almost the same position. He had fixed the one stick across the top of the other so as to form a rough T, and was now busy in fitting a smaller stick into the angle between them, by manipulating which, the cross one could be either cocked up or depressed to any extent. He had cut notches too in the perpendicular stick, so that by the aid of the small prop, the cross one could be kept in any position for an indefinite time.

'Look here, Jack!' he cried whenever he saw

that I was awake. 'Come, and give me your opinion. Suppose I put this cross-stick pointing straight at a thing, and arranged this small one so as to keep it so, and left it, I could find that thing again if I wanted it—don't you think I could, Jack—don't you think so?' he continued nervously, clutching me by the arm.

'Well,' I answered, 'it would depend on how far off the thing was, and how accurately it was pointed. If it were any distance, I'd cut sights on your cross-stick; then a string tied to the end of it, and held in a plumb-line forwards, would lead you pretty near what you wanted. But surely, Tom, you don't intend to localise the ghost in that way!'

'You'll see to-night, old friend—you'll see to-night. I'll carry this to the Sasassa Valley. You get the loan of Madison's crowbar, and come with me; but mind you tell no man where you are going, or what you want it for.'

All day Tom was walking up and down the room, or working hard at the apparatus. His eyes were glistening, his cheek hectic, and he had all the symptoms of high fever. 'Heaven grant that Dick's diagnosis be not correct!' I thought, as I returned with the crowbar; and yet, as evening drew near, I found myself imperceptibly sharing the excitement.

About six o'clock Tom sprang to his feet and seized his sticks. 'I can stand it no longer, Jack,' he cried; 'up with your crowbar, and hey for Sasassa Valley! To-night's work, my lad, will either make us or mar us! Take your six-shooter, in case we meet the Kaffirs. I daren't take mine, Jack,' he continued, putting his hands upon my shoulders—'I daren't take mine; for if my ill-luck sticks to me to-night, I don't know what I might not do with it.'

Well, having filled our pockets with provisions, we set out, and as we took our wearisome way towards the Sasassa Valley, I frequently attempted to elicit from my companion some clue as to his intentions. But his only answer was: 'Let us hurry on, Jack. Who knows how many have heard of Wharton's adventure by this time! Let us hurry on, or we may not be first in the field!'

Well sir, we struggled on through the hills for a matter of ten miles; till at last, after descending a crag, we saw opening out in front of us a ravine so sombre and dark that it might have been the gate of Hades itself; cliffs many hundred feet high shut in on every side the gloomy boulder-studded passage which led through the haunted defile into Kaffirland. The moon rising above the crags, threw into strong relief the rough irregular pinnacles of rock by which they were topped, while all below was dark as Erebus.

'The Sasassa Valley?' said I.

'Yes,' said Tom.

I looked at him. He was calm now; the flush and feverishness had passed away; his actions were deliberate and slow. Yet there was a certain rigidity in his face and glitter in his eye which shewed that a crisis had come.

We entered the pass, stumbling along amid the great boulders. Suddenly I heard a short quick exclamation from Tom. 'That's the crag!' he cried, pointing to a great mass looming before us in the darkness. 'Now Jack, for any favour use your eyes! We're about a hundred yards from that cliff, I take it; so you move slowly

towards one side, and I'll do the same towards the other. When you see anything, stop, and call out. Don't take more than twelve inches in a step, and keep your eye fixed on the cliff about eight feet from the ground. Are you ready?'

'Yes.' I was even more excited than Tom by this time. What his intention or object was, I could not conjecture, beyond that he wanted to examine by daylight the part of the cliff from which the light came. Yet the influence of the romantic situation and of my companion's suppressed excitement was so great, that I could feel the blood coursing through my veins and count the pulses throbbing at my temples.

'Start!' cried Tom; and we moved off, he to the right, I to the left, each with our eyes fixed intently on the base of the crag. I had moved perhaps twenty feet, when in a moment it burst upon me. Through the growing darkness there shone a small ruddy glowing point, the light from which waned and increased, flickered and oscillated, each change producing a more weird effect than the last. The old Kaffir superstition came into my mind, and I felt a cold shudder pass over me. In my excitement, I stepped a pace backwards, when instantly the light went out, leaving utter darkness in its place; but when I advanced again, there was the ruddy glare glowing from the base of the cliff. 'Tom, Tom!' I cried.

'Ay, ay!' I heard him exclaim, as he hurried over towards me.

'There it is—there, up against the cliff!'

Tom was at my elbow. 'I see nothing,' said he.

'Why, there, there, man, in front of you!' I stepped to the right as I spoke, when the light instantly vanished from my eyes.

But from Tom's ejaculations of delight it was clear that from my former position it was visible to him also. 'Jack,' he cried, as he turned and wrung my hand—'Jack, you and I can never complain of our luck again. Now heap up a few stones where we are standing.—That's right. Now we must fix my sign-post firmly in at the top. There! It would take a strong wind to blow that down; and we only need it to hold out till morning. O Jack, my boy, to think that only yesterday we were talking of becoming clerks, and you saying that no man knew what was awaiting him too! By Jove, Jack, it would make a good story!'

By this time we had firmly fixed the perpendicular stick in between two large stones; and Tom bent down and peered along the horizontal one. For fully a quarter of an hour he was alternately raising and depressing it, until at last, with a sigh of satisfaction, he fixed the prop into the angle, and stood up. 'Look along, Jack,' he said. 'You have as straight an eye to take a sight as any man I know of.'

I looked along. There, beyond the further sight was the ruddy scintillating speck, apparently at the end of the stick itself, so accurately had it been adjusted.

'And now, my boy,' said Tom, 'let's have some supper, and a sleep. There's nothing more to be done to-night; but we'll need all our wits and strength to-morrow. Get some sticks, and kindle a fire here, and then we'll be able to keep an eye on our signal-post, and see that nothing happens to it during the night.'

Well sir, we kindled a fire, and had supper with the Sasassa demon's eye rolling and glowing in front of us the whole night through. Not always in the same place though; for after supper, when I glanced along the sights to have another look at it, it was nowhere to be seen. The information did not, however, seem to disturb Tom in any way. He merely remarked: 'It's the moon, not the thing, that has shifted;' and coiling himself up, went to sleep.

By early dawn we were both up, and gazing along our pointer at the cliff; but we could make out nothing save the one dead monotonous slaty surface, rougher perhaps at the part we were examining than elsewhere, but otherwise presenting nothing remarkable.

'Now for your idea, Jack!' said Tom Donahue, unwinding a long thin cord from round his waist. 'You fasten it, and guide me while I take the other end.' So saying he walked off to the base of the cliff, holding one end of the cord, while I drew the other taut, and wound it round the middle of the horizontal stick, passing it through the sight at the end. By this means I could direct Tom to the right or left, until we had our string stretching from the point of attachment, through the sight, and on to the rock, which it struck about eight feet from the ground. Tom drew a chalk circle of about three feet diameter round the spot, and then called to me to come and join him. 'We've managed this business together, Jack,' he said, 'and we'll find what we are to find, together.' The circle he had drawn embraced a part of the rock smoother than the rest, save that about the centre there were a few rough protuberances or knobs. One of these Tom pointed to with a cry of delight. It was a roughish brownish mass about the size of a man's closed fist, and looking like a bit of dirty glass let into the wall of the cliff. 'That's it!' he cried—'that's it!'

'That's what?'

'Why, man, a diamond, and such a one as there isn't a monarch in Europe but would envy Tom Donahue the possession of. Up with your crowbar, and we'll soon exorcise the demon of Sasassa Valley!'

I was so astounded that for a moment I stood speechless with surprise, gazing at the treasure which had so unexpectedly fallen into our hands.

'Here, hand me the crowbar,' said Tom. 'Now, by using this little round knob which projects from the cliff here, as a fulcrum, we may be able to lever it off.—Yes; there it goes. I never thought it could have come so easily. Now, Jack, the sooner we get back to our hut and then down to Cape Town, the better.'

We wrapped up our treasure, and made our way across the hills, towards home. On the way, Tom told me how, while a law-student in the Middle Temple, he had come upon a dusty pamphlet in the library, by one Jans van Hounym, which told of an experience very similar to ours, which had befallen that worthy Dutchman in the latter part of the seventeenth century, and which resulted in the discovery of a luminous diamond. This tale it was which had come into Tom's head as he listened to honest Dick Wharton's ghost-story; while the means which he had adopted to verify his supposition sprang from his own fertile Irish brain.

'We'll take it down to Cape Town,' continued

Tom, 'and if we can't dispose of it with advantage there, it will be worth our while to ship for London with it. Let us go along to Madison's first, though; he knows something of these things, and can perhaps give us some idea of what we may consider a fair price for our treasure.'

We turned off from the track accordingly, before reaching our hut, and kept along the narrow path leading to Madison's farm. He was at lunch when we entered; and in a minute we were seated at each side of him, enjoying South African hospitality.

'Well,' he said, after the servants were gone, 'what's in the wind now? I see you have something to say to me. What is it?'

Tom produced his packet, and solemnly untied the handkerchiefs which enveloped it. 'There!' he said, putting his crystal on the table; 'what would you say was a fair price for that?'

Madison took it up and examined it critically. 'Well,' he said, laying it down again, 'in its crude state about twelve shillings per ton.'

'Twelve shillings!' cried Tom, starting to his feet. 'Don't you see what it is?'

'Rock-salt!'

'Rock fiddle; a diamond.'

'Taste it!' said Madison.

Tom put it to his lips, dashed it down with a dreadful exclamation, and rushed out of the room.

I felt sad and disappointed enough myself; but presently remembering what Tom had said about the pistol, I, too, left the house, and made for the hut, leaving Madison open-mouthed with astonishment. When I got in, I found Tom lying in his bunk with his face to the wall, too dispirited apparently to answer my consolations. Anathematising Dick and Madison, the Sasassa demon, and everything else, I strolled out of the hut, and refreshed myself with a pipe after our wearisome adventure. I was about fifty yards away from the hut, when I heard issuing from it the sound which of all others I least expected to hear. Had it been a groan or an oath, I should have taken it as a matter of course; but the sound which caused me to stop and take the pipe out of my mouth was a hearty roar of laughter! Next moment, Tom himself emerged from the door, his whole face radiant with delight. 'Game for another ten-mile walk, old fellow?'

'What! for another lump of rock-salt, at twelve shillings a ton?'

"No more of that, Hal, an you love me," grinned Tom. 'Now look here, Jack. What blessed fools we are to be so floored by a trifle! Just sit on this stump for five minutes, and I'll make it as clear as daylight. You've seen many a lump of rock-salt stuck in a crag, and so have I, though we did make such a mull of this one. Now, Jack, did any of the pieces you have ever seen shine in the darkness brighter than any fire-fly?'

'Well, I can't say they ever did.'

'I'd venture to prophesy that if we waited until night, which we won't do, we would see that light still glimmering among the rocks. Therefore, Jack, when we took away this worthless salt, we took the wrong crystal. It is no very strange thing in these hills that a piece of rock-salt should be lying within a foot of a diamond. It caught our eyes, and we were excited, and so we made fools of ourselves, and left the real

stone behind. Depend upon it, Jack, the Sasassa gem is lying within that magic circle of chalk upon the face of yonder cliff. Come, old fellow, light your pipe and stow your revolver, and we'll be off before that fellow Madison has time to put two and two together.'

I don't know that I was very sanguine this time. I had begun in fact to look upon the diamond as a most unmitigated nuisance. However, rather than throw a damper on Tom's expectations, I announced myself eager to start. What a walk it was! Tom was always a good mountaineer, but his excitement seemed to lend him wings that day, while I scrambled along after him as best I could. When we got within half a mile he broke into the 'double,' and never pulled up until he reached the round white circle upon the cliff. Poor old Tom! when I came up, his mood had changed, and he was standing with his hands in his pockets, gazing vacantly before him with a rueful countenance.

'Look!' he said—'look!' and he pointed at the cliff. Not a sign of anything in the least resembling a diamond there. The circle included nothing but flat slate-coloured stone, with one large hole, where we had extracted the rock-salt, and one or two smaller depressions. No sign of the gem.

'I've been over every inch of it,' said poor Tom. 'It's not there. Some one has been here and noticed the chalk, and taken it. Come home, Jack; I feel sick and tired. Oh! had any man ever luck like mine!'

I turned to go, but took one last look at the cliff first. Tom was already ten paces off.

'Hollo!' I cried, 'don't you see any change in that circle since yesterday?'

'What d'ye mean?' said Tom.

'Don't you miss a thing that was there before?'

'The rock-salt?' said Tom.

'No; but the little round knob that we used for a fulcrum. I suppose we must have wrenched it off in using the lever. Let's have a look at what it's made of.'

Accordingly, at the foot of the cliff we searched about among the loose stones.

'Here you are, Jack! We've done it at last! We're made men!'

I turned round, and there was Tom radiant with delight, and with a little corner of black rock in his hand. At first sight it seemed to be merely a chip from the cliff; but near the base there was projecting from it an object which Tom was now exultingly pointing out. It looked at first something like a glass eye; but there was a depth and brilliancy about it such as glass never exhibited. There was no mistake this time; we had certainly got possession of a jewel of great value; and with light hearts we turned from the valley, bearing away with us the 'fiend' which had so long reigned there.

There sir; I've spun my story out too long, and tired you perhaps. You see when I get talking of those rough old days, I kind of see the little cabin again, and the brook beside it, and the bush around, and seem to hear Tom's honest voice once more. There's little for me to say now. We prospered on the gem. Tom Donahue, as you know, has set up here, and is well known about town. I have done well, farming and ostrich-raising in Africa. We set old Dick Wharton up

in business, and he is one of our nearest neighbours. If you should ever be coming up our way sir, you'll not forget to ask for Jack Turnbull—Jack Turnbull of Sasassa Farm.

FLIRTS AND FLIRTATION.

BY A LADY.

FLIRTATION, strictly defined, is the effort to attract particular attention from the opposite sex by any means, lawful or unlawful; by flatteries, either subtle or gross—according to the tact or taste of the artist—by dress, attitudes, and airs. This, and seeking the society of men, on the part of girls, and adopting a completely different manner towards the two sexes. Accepting this, then, as the true definition of the term, we must be understood, throughout the following remarks, to speak only of what is *unmitigatedly evil* in the practice. What often passes under the name of *harmless* flirtation with those who use it, is not flirting at all, but is merely the pleasant, free, frank intercourse between young men and women with unoccupied hearts, without which society could not get on, as long as the sexes do not live apart in priories or convents. This we would be very far indeed from condemning. In true flirtation there is always the element of coquetry, which entirely separates it from any other kind of intercourse between the sexes.

Flirtation may be called a game between two people, carried on, as the Germans say, 'unter vier Augen' (under four eyes).

In some cases, but not often, the game develops affection on both sides, or only on one; and when the latter, it must very quickly come to an end, after perhaps much suffering, especially if the attachment be on the woman's side. Flirting seems to be indulged in by most young people as their way of life, sometimes for the mere pleasure of it, or for the gratification of vanity and love of conquest, but more often with the ulterior design on the part of women of securing a husband. Men as a rule are not so given to aimless flirtations as women. They are either passably indifferent to most of the girls they meet, or else fall violently in love with one or another, from time to time, so that they have at least the merit of being, or believing themselves to be sincere, while the fancy lasts. With men, moreover, flirtation lacks the obnoxious element of indelicacy, which is usually inseparable from the same practice in a woman. She should always be the wooed, never the wooer. If a pleasurable, flirting is also an exhausting excitement, and requires great pains on a woman's part, unless she be what is termed a finished coquette, an adept in the art, who exercises it from mere love of power; though she may not have the smallest special regard for the individual man at the time being, and would perhaps repulse any serious demonstration on his part.

This kind of flirting is not very often met with in real life. It seems chiefly confined to the heroines of sensational novels and verse. The more commonplace style is that of the girl who flirts merely because it seems 'the thing' to do, or because others do it, or that she may be admired, or have a beau, or get settled in life. How much of really enjoyable intercourse with men do girls deprive themselves of, by this almost invariable intro-

duction of flirting into all society-talk. There are some men—and they are the best sort—who do not care for ceaseless flirting or ‘chaffing;’ and there are many others who are afraid, in these days of practical young ladies, of being entrapped into a marriage or a ‘breach of promise case,’ if they seem to like the society of any specially attractive girl, whom they may fancy to talk to, but towards whom they have no serious intentions. Such men would sometimes feel it a relief to meet a girl with whom they might feel safe, at least from matrimonial designs.

It would be well perhaps to say what flirting is *not*, lest we should be thought to advocate prudery. No intercourse between the sexes should be classed as flirting, after the element of real love has entered into it. ‘All is fair in love’—certainly in mutual and declared love, or even undeclared, when a woman is sure of her standing in the man’s estimation. There is nothing more hateful and unwomanly than ultra-prudery. The cold, proper ‘Lady Byron’ type of woman has, one might almost venture to say, destroyed the happiness of as many men as the coquette. If a girl were to bestow as many of her little gracious smiles on her acknowledged lover, and to take as much pains to retain his admiration as to gain that of the indifferent, and if young wives did the same, even calling in the aid of such small attractions as dress, there would be a good many happier people in the world, both men and women. No one can live contentedly without appreciation and special attentions from those they love; and men are known to be even fonder of such little attentions than women.

Having now guarded against the accusation of intolerance, we may be permitted to say a few words regarding flirtation, pure and simple, as a practice, especially in the female sex. It is unworthy in its aims, always unsatisfying, and often disastrous in its results. It has degraded women in the eyes of all worthy men, making them regard almost all girls from the age of sixteen as men-seekers or husband-hunters, or at best as vain, frivolous, and empty-headed. Such women—as George Eliot makes one of her characters say—‘hinder men’s lives from having any nobleness in them.’ Can we think of Beatrice, Laura, Heloise, any of the women of fable or history, who have inspired the grandest passions in the breasts of the noblest men—as flirts? Or even the types of womanly excellence held up to our admiration in the pages of the best novels—Romola, Dinah, Dorothea, Emma, Fanny Price, Charles Kingsley’s Grace, and various others whose names will occur to all fiction-readers. Dare any author—even a third-rate sensation novelist—submit to our approbation as an ideal heroine, or even as an imperfect though worthy female character—a flirt? Yet such has come to be almost regarded as the normal type of young women in real life, all of whose errors are to be condoned, or at least palliated, as natural and excusable. If such women were merely to consider the matter of policy, they would acknowledge that the indiscriminate flirt enjoys but little of the real pride of conquest, as it is called; she never gains the deference, the almost worship awarded by men to the higher type of woman. The flirt often fails in her efforts; and where she succeeds, it has been after the expense of such

infinite pains that she can merely feel that she has got what has cost her desperate means to secure.

The flirt is known by unmistakable signs, to any one of the smallest perception. All are familiar with the numerous varieties of the species. We need only mention a few; and very few words will suffice to indicate the peculiarities of each. There is the noisy, boisterous ‘fast girl,’ whose flirting is but one of her characteristics, along with her extravagant dress, slang speeches, and general unconventionality of demeanour and disregard of appearances. There is the common vulgar flirt, who has neither intellect nor education sufficient to qualify her even for the exercise of the very low art which she professes. This style we are chiefly familiar with in the person of the maid-of-all-work in her intercourse with the milkman or the policeman. But girls of a better class often remind us of her, their flirting merely consisting of pert saucy speeches and tosses of the head. Then there is the sly quiet flirt, less objectionable to society in general, though perhaps more dangerous and designing than the open hoyden. Among this class may be found the ‘Becky Sharpes’ and ‘Blanche Amories’ who, since the advent of Thackeray’s novels, have come to be regarded as the types of artful woman-kind. These are fond of nooks and corners; their batteries are little soft flattering speeches, demure glances, and an affectation of infantine simplicity and innocence; and their victims are generally young unwary lads or easily gulled old gentlemen. There is the practical designing flirt, who sets herself deliberately and of *malice prepense* to entrap a husband, or at least an admirer, with the variety—chiefly found, happily, in sensation novels—of the girl who has an additional zest lent to her game if she can interfere with the claims of other women—either wives or sweet-hearts. Some would perhaps include the *unconscious* flirt, if such a thing can be; that is, the girl who is naturally gay, and has little winning coaxing ways, which if aided by a pretty person, make her specially attractive, if not dangerous.

Having said so much regarding the coquette, it would be unfair to conclude without passing condemnation upon the male flirt or ‘coquet.’ A most objectionable being; but one, to do men justice, seldom met with, at least in its worst form—that is, the lady-killer. We do not at all mean the ‘ladies’ man.’ There are very few girls, even of the sedate type, who do not like a man who tries to make himself agreeable to ladies, even to the extent of soft speeches and harmless gallantries. Indeed a man who is not fond of ladies’ society is generally fond of much worse things. And that which would be flirting in a woman, is not flirting in a man, or even meant for it; for some license must be allowed to the sex which ought to take the ‘initiative.’ But there is a degraded type of man who goes much further, and often has the breaking of hearts to atone for; one who does so with his eyes open, and knowing well the consequences of his procedure. There are men who set themselves to the task of winning hearts for the pleasure of the game, and who will go to great pains and artifices to do so. They generally exercise their art on young unsophisticated girls—where they can find such—as more fresh and interesting, and easier to

deceive than those who are *au fait* in the practices of coquetry themselves. These are the 'handsome men,' who, by means of a flattering tongue, can easily, in a few pointed speeches—just keeping clear of an actual declaration—make a simple girl think herself the chosen and beloved one. If he mean nothing serious, what can be more unmanly, more ungenerous, than such a course of conduct on a man's part? The male *jilt* can be called to account for his actions; but the mere flirt, the 'lady-killer,' plays his heartless game in secret, quite unsuspected—if he be very artful and wary—even by the girl's family; his delinquencies may be known only to the sufferer herself, who, of course, cannot 'make her moan,' even if she would do so, as he has given her no hold over him. He has had his little amusement, and when he tires, he leaves his victim to seek another.

It may be said 'a woman should not give her heart till very sure of what she is getting in exchange;' but women cannot always be on their guard if a man seems very devoted. The practised male flirt is perilously like the real lover, even to the more wary of the opposite sex; and the heart is sometimes gone irretrievably before the deceived girl knows that she has given everything and got nothing. Happily, the men we have portrayed are rare, and as they often come across girls who can hold their own, or perhaps turn the tables on them, they are not able to do so much mischief as they might otherwise do. Flirts of both sexes have much to answer for. Perhaps they too may have their own troubles, in disappointed hopes and frustrated endeavours. They may sometimes, perhaps, feel the sting of remorse after an especially bad case, in which a lifelong sorrow to another has been the consequence of what was to them merely the pastime of a few weeks or months.

STORY OF A PET MONKEY.

A REMARKABLE instance of intelligence and attachment in a pet monkey, may interest lovers of 'our poor relations' and of animals in general. My hero, a very large and extremely powerful specimen of his class, belonged to a late officer in the British army; and he, having been a member of my own immediate family, the veracity of the following anecdote can be vouched for. Peter was a universal favourite with—one individual only excepted—all the inmates and frequenters of the barracks, where his unusual sagacity and many varied accomplishments were a source of endless amusement; although it must be confessed that some of his tricks had a rather mischievous tendency. His gentleness of disposition and genuine love of fun, nevertheless, procured ready forgiveness.

Peter unfortunately possessed an enemy in the person of a diminutive and generally unpopular subaltern, to whom he appears in some mysterious way to have rendered himself particularly obnoxious. Or perhaps this regrettable state of affairs may have arisen from one of those curious cases of instinctive and mutual aversion at first-sight which, like other and more agreeable impressions of a totally opposite character, are difficult to account for, in man as well as in the lower animals.

During a temporary absence of his master on leave, Peter was intrusted to the care of a brother-officer and most intimate friend, who, on undertaking the responsibility, conscientiously kept him chained to a chest of drawers in his own barrack-room, being anxious that no harm should happen to the monkey while under his charge. This kindly and well-meant arrangement did not, however, at all coincide with Peter's elastic views on the subject. The loss of general society, and hitherto undisturbed liberty of action, the unwonted confinement and restriction, appear to have greatly depressed him. Thus left in a great measure to his own narrow resources, the interesting captive still rose equal to the occasion, though his field of action was certainly limited. To while the tedious hours away, upon a certain day during which he was left alone longer than usual—there being an inspection by the general commanding the district—he seems, in despair, to have hit upon the following occupation. Having, with an amount of patience and perseverance worthy of a better cause, forced open the locks of all the drawers—a feat requiring a very considerable degree of strength—he strewed the miscellaneous contents upon the floor, and seated himself in the centre, monarch of all he surveyed; and doubtless contemplated with tranquil satisfaction the chaos he had produced. Having presumably tired of this, comparatively speaking, harmless recreation, he had evidently begun to look about for further relaxation of mind, combined with healthful exercise of body. Unfortunately, he soon espied a very large inkstand, placed, it must be allowed in extenuation, within easy reach. Immediately availing himself of the contents, and as a little pleasing variety of excitement, he deliberately and with an unsparing hand bedaubed every article of his hospitable entertainer's property with ink. The *tableau vivant* on the entrance of the unsuspecting host may be possibly better imagined than described. Either Peter was a most consummate actor, or else he really honestly considered the effect of his striking performance to be highly artistic and ornamental; for he appeared to be totally unconscious that he had been guilty of the slightest wrong-doing in this somewhat sensational scene. He was mercifully spared from punishment, but summarily dismissed from his comfortable quarters, and left to wander about the barracks 'in monkey meditation, fancy free.'

Delighted to regain his liberty on any terms, all for a time went well. During his rambles, like Richard III. encountering Richmond on Bosworth Field, Peter unluckily met, not the object of his affections, but of his intense dislike; and springing on to the shoulders of the irate and alarmed subaltern, in the presence of a large number of officers and men—whose sympathies were of course all with Peter—he very nearly succeeded, to the great amusement of the audience, in drawing the sword of his enraged victim, who, if report did not cruelly belie him, was not at all likely to draw it readily himself! The ludicrous position in which the latter was thus placed, and the loud laughter of those assembled, of course vastly increased the subaltern's former hatred of the popular and now victorious monkey. They parted with ominous signs, at anyrate on one side, of anticipated

revenge, to be carried out sooner or later to the bitter end.

Shortly after this assault-at-arms, poor Peter was found in a woful condition; it being discovered, amidst general indignation, that he had been fired at, and seriously injured by gun-shot wounds. Notwithstanding the impossibility of proving who was guilty of this unmanly and cowardly action, it was openly attributed to the only person who was capable of committing it—the now most cordially detested subaltern, who had, it was well known, never forgiven the indignity publicly inflicted on him; the annoyance of which was immensely aggravated by the story having become the standing joke of the entire garrison. Peter's numerous sympathising friends did their utmost to save his life, which was in imminent danger. He had the best medical advice; the slugs were all extracted; and with surgical skill and affectionate care, he was happily soon restored to health. His master returned at the time of Peter's convalescence, and the rapturous joy of the poor monkey at seeing him once more will never be forgotten by those who witnessed it. He clung to him, and fondly embraced him over and over again; repeatedly kissing, or rather licking his face and hands, with every possible demonstration of the most devoted attachment.

When the first paroxysm of delight had subsided, Peter, sitting on the table, the better to gaze upon his newly recovered friend and able champion, looked earnestly at him, and clasping his arm, to bespeak special attention, pointed with his own forefinger to each of the wounds whence the slugs had been taken; trying at the same time, in the nearest approach to speech that he could accomplish, to tell the piteous story of his narrow escape from a violent death, at the hands of his ruthless assailant; who never, by the way, had the courage to further molest the subject of this brief memoir. It is questionable if the most intellectual of human beings, not gifted with the power of speech, could have acted more pathetically, or indicated more vividly what had occurred to them during the absence of their natural protector and dearest friend.

FRAUDULENT HAWKERS.

ONE day, in January last, a decently dressed person visited my house and inquired for me by name; afterwards introducing himself as the agent of a firm who were commissioned to sell at a tremendous sacrifice a vast quantity of unclaimed luggage which had been left at the depôts of the various railway Companies. Having heretofore always been under the impression that such luggage was disposed of by the Companies themselves at public auction, I was curious to know something of the firm which had engaged in the speculation of buying up these goods; but the agent shirked my questions, and produced samples of calicoes, flannels, muslins, and other draperies, which he offered to sell to me at prices so ridiculously low, that I was induced to give him a rather large order. Promising that the goods should be delivered in the course of a week or so, he booked the order, being very exact about

the name and address; and then begged leave to call up his assistant with some samples of wonderfully cheap cloth which they had to dispose of.

Leave being readily granted, he called up his assistant, who appeared bearing a very weighty bundle, which on being opened, turned out, not to contain samples but pieces of cloth, each of sufficient size to make a suit of clothes. These he began to exhibit and praise after the manner of people who have goods to sell, assuring me that they were all of the very best quality and make, and not to be purchased in any shop in the kingdom for double the price he was willing to take—namely thirty shillings the piece—choose where I would. The goods were dressed and faced to appear like sound woollen cloths and tweeds, being sufficiently well got up to deceive most ordinary people, especially as each piece was printed with the words 'Royal Patent' in gilt letters at one end; and the 'agent' did not scruple to guarantee them as 'all wool.' As it happened, however, I knew sufficient about woollen manufactures to enable me to detect that the goods were neither 'all wool' nor yet cloth properly so called, but unmistakable shoddy, and shoddy of a very inferior quality to boot; so declined taking advantage of the 'bargain' he offered me. Finding that I was proof against both cajolery and flattery, he bundled up his coloured goods, leaving out one piece which I had chanced to examine somewhat narrowly, flinging it over the back of a chair with apparent carelessness, but really in a manner which exhibited it at its best, and proceeded to open a smaller parcel from which he took a piece of glossy black material, with the remark: 'There sir! there's an article I'll defy you to match in all England, either at the price I'm going to ask you, or at any other! The fact is sir, we have such a demand for this very article, that we have orders not to sell more than one piece to any person; otherwise clergymen and other professional men would soon clear out all our stock and leave none for general customers.'

Shoddy again, artfully got up to imitate West of England broadcloth, but still shoddy.

'Now sir,' he continued, 'when I tell you that five-and-thirty shillings is all we ask for a piece of cloth like that, you have too much discernment to let such an opportunity of making a bargain slip. You'll never have such another chance, as our firm has but very little of it left.'

I, however, obstinately declined to avail myself of the great opportunity which was never to occur again; and my would-be benefactor slowly gathered his goods together, trying me once more, however, with the piece of stuff he had thrown over the chair, offering it, as a last resource, at what he termed the giving-away price of five-and-twenty shillings.

After what had transpired, I very much doubted whether my order for draperies would ever be complied with. So it turned out. I have not since then seen or heard anything about either the man or his goods, nor have I been able to discover a firm in Liverpool bearing the name under which he travelled. Therefore I have come to the conclusion that the cheap draperies

had no existence in fact, but were only assumed as an introduction to the really worthless cloth. That the cloth was worthless, a friend of mine discovered to his chagrin; for having been persuaded to purchase a piece of the so-called tweed, he had it made up; but it so rapidly became 'baggy' at the knees and elbows, as to be quite unserviceable.

On another occasion I was interviewed by a person who had some pictures to dispose of. Not being inclined to purchase, I at first refused to inspect the man's goods; but he pleaded so persistently to be permitted to exhibit them, that eventually I allowed him to do so—first warning him that I should not purchase any. They proved to be rather indifferent oleographs, mounted in showy German frames, but got up to imitate oil-paintings, being furnished with canvas backs, and having a name printed or painted in one corner. Though in speaking of them the man did not actually state that they were oil-paintings, he spoke of them in such ambiguous terms, that inexperienced persons would have inferred that they were. He was not so reticent about the frames. Those he declared were double-gilt, and of the very best quality and make, being well worth the money which he demanded for picture and frame together—namely five-and-twenty shillings each, payable either in one sum, or by weekly instalments of not less than half-a-crown for each picture. The offer was tempting enough doubtless; but I could not appreciate the advantage of paying twenty-five shillings, by instalments even, for an article which any respectable picture-dealer would gladly supply me with for half a guinea cash; and positively declined his offer.

Finding that I was firm in my refusal, he packed up his pictures as if to leave me, and had got to the door, when he turned round and begged as a favour, he being a stranger in the town, that I would permit him to leave his pictures until the morning. This favour I readily granted, on the verbal understanding that I would not be responsible for any damage done to them whilst in my care.

Neither the next day nor for several days did any one call for the pictures, which had meanwhile been relegated to the attic. About a fortnight afterwards however, an individual came and presented me with a lithographed form, by which it appeared that I had become the purchaser of four pictures, value five pounds, payable by weekly instalments of ten shillings. This first instalment he politely requested me to pay, and was apparently much astonished when I declined, and denied any intention of even contemplating the purchase of the said pictures. At first he refused to receive back the pictures, arguing that I had had them in my possession more than a fortnight, and that therefore I was bound to keep them. It was not until I had the pictures placed outside the door, and had ordered him to follow them, that I could get rid of him; but eventually he left me, threatening me with an action in the county court; which, however, he never entered.

Of course the whole affair was a scheme to force the pictures upon me whether I would or not. I afterwards discovered that several persons in the neighbourhood had been victimised by these gentry; having been trapped into signing an agreement and paying an instalment, they found that

they had no remedy but to pay the full amount demanded.

Although there are doubtless many honest travelling agents, for my part, after the above two experiences, I have determined in future to have no dealings whatever with predatory merchants of any sort, unless I know that they are really the agents of respectable firms.

'GOD KNOWS.'

[SOME years ago a child's body was found on the South Coast, having been thrown there by the waves. The parish clerk on being asked what should be put on its grave, answered in perplexity: 'God knows.' This proved a fitting epitaph.]

Where the tear-fed violet blooms;
Where the shade the sunbeam chases;
Where in mossy marble tombs
Sleep the dead beneath the daisies;
Where the mourner slowly wanders
When the bird hath sought its nest,
And amid the gloaming ponders
Over those who tranquil rest;

Clouds across the crimsoned sky,
Homeward gaily were careering;
But in that lone churchyard, I
Heeded not that night was nearing.
Discords in my bosom swelling,
Broke the music of life's song,
For my soul was weary dwelling
'Mid the ever-earthly throng.

Far within the stilly shade
Of a quiet sequestered corner,
Where the wild-flowers bloom and fade,
Gently nurtured by no mourner,
Was a grave, an infant's only.
No one knew the name she bore.
Ask the waves which, dark and lonely,
Cast her lifeless on the shore!

O'er this grave a humble stone
Reared its lichened head so lowly,
Like a sentinel alone,
Watching 'mid the silence holy.
Hither came the croaking raven;
From this stone its weird notes rose;
On its surface rudely graven
Were the simple words, 'God knows.'

As a moonbeam on the sea
Charms the sad winds' shriek to singing,
So those tender words to me
Tuned my song, sweet solace bringing.
Though my thorn-strewn way was dreary,
Though my feet found no repose,
Yet my soul, life-worn and weary,
Rested in the thought, 'God knows.'

W. F. E. L.

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